Transportation and WV’s Communities

Why Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Transit, facilities are Important to Rural Areas and Small Communities in West Virginia

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Transportation and West Virginia’s Communities

Demographics

Changing attitudes about transportation

Economic development

Why should they care about other forms of transportation?
Shrinking Population

West Virginia’s population will decrease by a little over 1% between 2016 and 2030.

- In 2016 West Virginia was the fourth oldest state in the nation with a median age of 42.3 and with 18% of the population being over 65 and with another 15% being between the ages of 55 and 64. Only New Hampshire, Vermont and Maine had older populations. (American Community Survey)

One in four people who reach 65 can expect to live to 90. (Social Security Administration)

2030: 22.9% > 65

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Older residents are less capable of driving while needing more medical and other services.

- The American Automobile Association (AAA website) estimates that seniors outlive their ability to drive safely by 7 to 10 years.
- Beginning at age 75 accident rates climb significantly. (AAA)

How do these demographic factors affect community’s?
The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) conducted a survey* to determine seniors’ attitudes towards home and transportation.

When seniors were asked their preferences for improvements to their community’s the top five responses were:

- **More Police presence**
- **Improve schools**
- **Make streets pedestrian friendly**
- **Improve public transportation for seniors and disabled**
- **Improve parks**

* AARP - What Makes a Livable Community?
Changing Attitudes (older and younger)

*place a very high value on quality of life issues when they choose where to live.*

Seniors want alternative transport*

Support Complete Streets

“Generation Y”
(Born between 1977 and 1994)

Buying fewer cars and driving less

Prefer multiple options for transportation*

* AARP-Different Generations, Similar Desires for Walkable Communities
• In West Virginia AARP convinced the Legislature and the Governor to pass and sign a “Complete Streets” bill in 2013.

• In 2015 Generation Y bought 47.5 cars per 1,000 people versus previous generations which bought approximately 67.1 cars per 1,000 people. (JD Power and Associates)

• In 2014 76.2% of persons between the ages of 20 and 24 had a drivers license in 1983 it was 92.3% (University of Michigan Study quoted in USA Today) This trend is continuing

* AARP-Different Generations, Similar Desires for Walkable Communities
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- Aging work force frequently does not have the skills needed for current technology
- Less demand for steam coal resulting in less mining activity
- Small population is shrinking
- Topography (mountains) difficult to develop for competitive industries such as agriculture or other business
Advantages

- Topography-West Virginia is a beautiful State
- Gas industry is compensating for some of the losses from coal.
- Existing infrastructure that can be repurposed.
- Existing housing stock and or land available at a relatively low cost.
How can transportation assist West Virginia?

1. address the needs of our aging population ⇒ People can stay in small communities.

2. enhance the attractiveness of our communities ⇒ attract existing and new workers.

3. create infrastructure ⇒ attract new business
1 Addressing the needs of our aging population

Invest in the public transportation infrastructure

- Vehicles Maintenance
- Frequent Schedules
- Better Coverage
- Create accessible bus stop locations
- door to door service
1 Addressing the needs of our aging population and young residents

Support healthy life styles

- Connect to parks
- Connect to transit service
- Access to outdoor activities
- Safe, comfortable, and inclusive walking environment
2 Enhance the attractiveness of our communities

- modern infrastructure (broadband)
- alternative forms of transportation.
- transportation facilities for new business and visitors
3 Active transportation creates new business

The Great Allegheny Passage (Washington DC-Pittsburgh)

800,000 people generated approximately $40 million of business to adjacent communities in 2008

In 2001 the Maine DOT estimated the economic impact of bicycle tourism at over $36 million a year.
A 2017 study for the Montana Department of Tourism estimates they have 500,000 cycling tourists who spend on average $75 a day. The average non-resident tourist spends $58 a day.
What is being done in West Virginia?

Statewide Trails Plan for both on road and off road facilities.
In North Central West Virginia the Rails to Trails Conservancy is pursuing a connection to the Greater Allegheny Trail
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Thank You